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No. 377

JUST WOMEN

BY

COLIN CAMPBELL CLEMENTS

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First produced at San Francisco, Little Theater.
Later by Carnegie Repertory Theater and Eugene
Woman's Club.

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NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH

PUBLISHER
28-30 WEST 38TH STREET

LONDON
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~ 1

JUST WOMEN

CHARACTERS

MRS. WARREN
BETTY
MRS. PICKERING
MRS. LAWTY
MRS. ROMNEY
LADY BLOSHIRE
CLARA

SCENE: *The play takes place in the living room of the WARREN home. It is during the early part of the Victorian period and MRS. WARREN'S home is filled with atrocious furniture of that period. At rise of curtain MRS. WARREN is sitting before an open fire at the L. knitting. CLARA comes in softly and lights the lamp on the table near the window at the back and pulls down the shades.*

MRS. WARREN. Is that you, Clara? Will you please light the lamp—the big one. It is so dark here—the fog is very thick this afternoon; although I have lived here for forty years, I declare I shall never get used to it. It is always dark in Northampton! (CLARA gets as far as the door) Clara, will you pull the shades—one never knows who might look in—people are getting so bold nowadays—so bold. (CLARA pulls the shades and starts out again) What time is it—the stage should be in at four or thereabouts—do you suppose anything could have

happened—happened in the fog, you know.—Clara, do have a nice dinner to-night. Betty will be so tired, poor child. I am so glad the women of Northampton do not know she is coming to-day. It is such a long way, such an awful long way to London—it must be all of two hundred miles. Oh yes, Clara, don't forget to make the tea rather strong to-night—not too strong—just so—and, Clara, we might have a little jelly with our meat to-night—current jelly—and you may use the best napkins—just to-night. We must not use the good ones too often as I want to keep them new for the——

CLARA. For the what, m'am?

MRS. WARREN. Eh? What did you say, Clara?

CLARA. (*Shouting*) What is it you want to keep the new napkins for?

MRS. WARREN. I want to keep them for the—never mind now, Clara, I just want to keep them.

CLARA. Yes ma'am.

MRS. WARREN. Oh dear, I hope Betty will be satisfied with Northampton after living a year in London. It is so wild! I have heard rather indirectly, however, that it has become so noisy there—one actually must shout to be heard—imagine it! Dear, dear, I know Betty will so enjoy the quiet of Northampton. But she was such a vivacious child—so full of life.

CLARA. And the devil!

MRS. WARREN. Yes, I am sure she will enjoy the quiet of Northampton.

CLARA. Gaud, ma'am, the biddies of Northampton can make more noise than all them trams in London town!

MRS. WARREN. Eh? What did you say, Clara?

CLARA. (*Shouting in ear trumpet*) I said, ma'am, that Miss Betty should come back a very fine lady.

MRS. WARREN. Yes, indeed, Clara, yes indeed. It was to one of the very best girls' schools in Lon-

don. I was almost afraid to let her go alone. I really should have gone to take care of her. (CLARA rolls her eyes heavenward) But her father, dear man, always wanted her to be well educated. He was a Warren, you know—a typical Warren—and dear Betty is so like her father. I hope it was for the best she went—it was sort of a memorial to her dear father. She always was a bright child, you know. A poetical sort of a child—she takes that from my side of the family. I shall never forget her first poem. I learned the first stanza. I think there must have been twenty or thirty in all. I sent it to the *Times* but they did not print it—art is becoming so dreadfully democratic—the first stanza went:

The mist is rising from the sea,
The birds are wide awake,
I take my pen in hand to write
These verses for your sake.

So like Wordsworth, isn't it? And the punctuation was perfect, so beautiful and innocent.

CLARA. Lud! How she can talk!

MRS. WARREN. Eh? What did you say, Clara?

CLARA. (*Shouting*) I said nothing, ma'am.

MRS. WARREN. (*Raising her ear trumpet*) I was sure I heard you making some sort of a noise, Clara.

CLARA. It—it must have been my asthma, ma'am.

MRS. WARREN. It is the fog, Clara. Have you done anything for it—try goose greese and flannel—rub it in well—the goose grease, I mean

CLARA. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. WARREN. Have you heard the stage horn? Dear, dear— (CLARA starts to go) Oh, and Clara, before you go will you hand me something to read—I'm so nervous. I must read something to soothe

my nerves—do you suppose anything could have happened?

CLARA. (*Taking up a magazine from the table*) Here is the new Graphic, ma'am.

MRS. WARREN. No—no—I'm really afraid to read these magazines and newspapers—they are so full of accidents and murders and robberies—and weddings. No, Clara, I'll read my Bible—it is such a comfort—such a comfort. (CLARA *hands her the Bible from the table and starts out*) Book of Job—Book of Job. (*The knocker is heard*) There, that must be Betty—and we did not hear the stage horn! (CLARA *goes out*. MRS. WARREN *fumbles with her Bible*)

CLARA. (*From the door*) It's the new minister's wife, ma'am, Mrs. Pickering.

MRS. WARREN. Eh?

CLARA. (*Shouting in the trumpet*) Mrs. Pickering.

MRS. WARREN. Oh yes, yes. Mrs. Pickering—have her come in, Clara. And Clara—here put my Bible on the table in a conspicuous place—but not too conspicuous—just so.

(CLARA *thumps down the Bible on the table and goes out.*)

MRS. PICKERING. (*A demure, emaciated little woman enters from the door at the back. She bows*) Mrs. Warren, good afternoon.

MRS. WARREN. Come up to the fire, Mrs. Pickering. It is so damp outside. I wonder that more of us are not sick abed.

MRS. PICKERING. (*Rolling her eyes heavenward*) God is good to his lambs.

MRS. WARREN. Eh? Your lower limbs? Yes, now that you speak of it that is where I suffer most.

MRS. PICKERING. You are so confidential.

MRS. WARREN. One should really wear a flannel

underskirt these days.

MRS. PICKERING. Yes, speaking of flannels, that is just what I tell my husband. We have just finished packing another big box of heavy underwear and Bibles for the starving South Sea Islanders. They are so illiterate!

MRS. WARREN. Literature? No, I only read my Bible.

MRS. PICKERING. (*Dismissing the misunderstanding with a wave of her hand*) I heard from my Mary that you were expecting your daughter home from London on the stage from Bedford.—You will excuse my late call—I am so anxious to meet your Betty, so anxious.

MRS. WARREN. Will you speak a little louder, Mrs. Pickering? I am sure you must be saying something though I can't hear a word—not too loud—just so.

MRS. PICKERING. (*Shouting in the trumpet*) I say I am so anxious to meet your Betty.

MRS. WARREN. Yes, we are expecting the dear child home to-day. I wonder if anything could have happened—it's such a long way from London to Northampton—such a very long way.

MRS. PICKERING. But you know there is a railroad as far as Bedford now.

MRS. WARREN. A what, Mrs. Pickering?

MRS. PICKERING. A railroad.

MRS. WARREN. (*With horror and indignation*) You really don't mean a steam rail?

MRS. PICKERING. Yes, indeed.

MRS. WARREN. Oh, but I know Betty would be far too sensible to ride on a steam railroad—it is just like taking one's life into one's own hands. What can people be thinking of to ride upon such things? Really I'm so worried—and the coach should be here—the world is coming to be so unreliable. (*The knocker is heard*) Oh, can that be

Betty? No, she would surely come right in. One need not stand on ceremony in one's own home—that is, not too much, just a certain amount, you know, Mrs. Pickering, is good for the training of any well-bred child, not too much you understand—or too little—just so.

CLARA. (*Entering and shouting in the trumpet*) Mrs. Lawty, ma'am.

MRS. WARREN. Oh, Mrs. Lawty, have her come right in, Clara—and Clara, will you bring my black shawl? It is folded away in the chest—and Clara, be careful with it. (CLARA *goes out*) It is a beautiful shawl. Mr. Warren brought it all the way from India—before we were married.—I want Betty to have it when she——

MRS. LAWTY. (*Entering quietly and bowing*) Mrs. Warren, Mrs. Pickering. (*Going to MRS. WARREN*) I have brought you over a bit of mint jelly.

MRS. WARREN. Thank you, Mr. Lawty—you are so kind. Oh, it's jelly. Do sit down, Mrs. Lawty.

MRS. LAWTY. My Nellie had it from Mrs. Pickering's Mary who got it from your Clara that your dear daughter Betty is coming home from London to-day. I am so anxious to see the dear child.

MRS. WARREN. Chill—no, you don't really mean it, Mrs. Lawty?

MRS. LAWTY. (*Shouting*) I say my Nellie had it from Mrs. Pickering's Mary who got it from your Clara that dear Betty is coming home to-day—the dear child.

MRS. WARREN. Yes, she is coming to-day. Did you hear anything else—concerning Betty, I mean, of course?

MRS. LAWTY. (*With deep interest*) Oh, is there more?

MRS. WARREN. You will pardon me but it's a secret, so to speak—for the present.

MRS. LAWTY. Yes, yes. But my dear Mrs. Warren, there should be no secrets between friends.

MRS. WARREN. But you know it is really Betty's secret—not mine.

MRS. LAWTY. (*To Mrs. PICKERING*) Secrets are so disconcerting! (*To Mrs. WARREN*) But you know I am so interested in Betty and everything that concerns her, so interested.

MRS. WARREN. Yes, yes.

MRS. LAWTY. (*To Mrs. PICKERING*) Strange tales concerning Betty have come down from London. She is so ambitious—socially, I mean. Oh dear, I hope she has done nothing indiscreet.

MRS. WARREN. Things seem to happen so rapidly, I can hardly realize Betty is a grown woman.

MRS. LAWTY. I wonder if the past year has changed her much. (*Shouting*) Changed her much.

MRS. WARREN. Yes, indeed, Mrs. Lawty, yes, indeed—everything has changed—the world is positively going round so fast that it makes me giddy. (*Confidentially*) I hear that Northampton is actually to have lights in the street!

MRS. LAWTY. Is it possible? Indeed there will soon be no privacy in the world.

MRS. PICKERING. Terrible!

MRS. LAWTY. I was reading in the *Times* that in London they are using trams without horses now.

MRS. WARREN. Eh?

MRS. LAWTY. I say in London they have trams without horses.

MRS. WARREN. Oh, dear, I wonder if anything could have happened.

MRS. PICKERING. I should never risk my life on one! It is a contrivance of the devil—the world is becoming so wicked!

MRS. WARREN. Trams without horses—steam

railroads! It was wicked of me to let Betty go without my care—I should have gone to look after her, but of course——

MRS. LAWTY. Little good that would have done. (*Shouting*) Why right here in Northampton they are covering our main street with a new sort of covering—just like glass.—I declare that I, for one, shall never walk on it.

MRS. PICKERING. Nor I—when I shop I shall go the back way. Modern improvements indeed!

MRS. LAWTY. Modern exterminators!

MRS. WARREN. Is that the knocker? I wonder who that can be. Clara, Clara!

CLARA. (*Entering from the back*) It's Mrs. Romney, ma'am.

MRS. WARREN. Have her come right in, Clara. This is a surprise. We did not think that the ladies of Northampton knew of Betty's return to-day.

MRS. ROMNEY. (*Entering with gusto*) How do you do, Mrs. Warren. Good afternoon, Mrs. Pickering and Mrs. Lawty. (*To MRS. WARREN*) I heard that Betty was to return to-day—that is I had a rather unauthentic report of it—you see, I got it from my Sadie who had it from Mrs. Lawty's Nellie who got it from Mrs. Pickering's Mary who had it from Clara that Betty would be home on to-day's coach—I am so anxious to see the dear child—and to hear the news of London. Things really happen there, you know. Northampton is so annoying and boresome at times—nothing ever happens here—it is only reported to *have* happened.

MRS. LAWTY. Servants are such gossips!

MRS. ROMNEY. But so unreliable! They always seem to miss *the* essential thing—the thing of particular interest, so to speak.

MRS. LAWTY. Of particular interest?

MRS. ROMNEY. Of course. It is not Betty's return that interests me so much as *why* she is return-

ing two months earlier than she expected.

MRS. LAWTY. There seems to be some secrecy in the whole affair.

MRS. ROMNEY. Secrecy?

MRS. WARREN. Do sit down, Mrs. Romney—you flutter about so.

MRS. ROMNEY. Flutter! Indeed!

MRS. WARREN. Do sit down, Mrs. Romney.

MRS. ROMNEY. (*Sitting*) Really I can't stay very long. I have just stopped in for a few moments after having tea with Lady Bloshire, a most interesting person.

MRS. PICKERING. And so refined.

MRS. ROMNEY. Her Ladyship is so interesting and knows so much of London life, you know. Her son is returning from London in a few days—and Lady Bloshire is so happy.

MRS. PICKERING. Indeed she must be a true mother—she should be very happy to think that her son would come back to her from wicked London.

MRS. ROMNEY. Wicked, indeed, Mrs. Pickering! It is no such thing—London is glorious! His Lordship does not intend to stay here long—simply came down on business, I think her Ladyship said—one is so busy when one is a Lord. He goes into the House next winter you know.

MRS. LAWTY. Fancy one caring for London when one can have the quiet and refinement of Northampton.

MRS. ROMNEY. I was raised in London—Northampton—bah! (*The ladies, except Mrs. WARREN, who has fallen asleep, spring to their feet*) Pardon me, ladies. Pray be seated. My temper does overcome me at times.

MRS. PICKERING. Indeed! Temper is an attribute of the devil! You should do all in your power to overcome it.

MRS. LAWTY. If you will pardon me, Mrs. Rom-

ney, I should say that you show your London raising most *emphatically* at times.

MRS. ROMNEY. Pray let us continue our most interesting conversation. By the by, have you met the new young doctor? Dr. Twing? A most learned young man—just down from Oxford.

MRS. LAWTY. Indeed—and from London—young men are not what they were when I was a girl.

MRS. ROMNEY. I am sure Betty and he would be such good friends. It might be a match, you know—and that would keep him in Northampton perhaps—we should really do all we can to keep a few interesting people in our town.

MRS. PICKERING. I hope he will prove a steady young man. If he is there will be very little time for his playing around with the belles of Northampton—what with new pavements and street lamps, horseless trams and steam coaches, not to mention births and deaths there will be enough to keep many doctors busy.

MRS. LAWTY. (*Whispering*) Betty was far too vivacious for any young gentleman before she left for London. There is nothing more discouraging to a man than a vivacious wife. I do hope for Mrs. Warren's sake that Betty has settled down—but from the things I have heard I fear she hasn't.

MRS. ROMNEY. Have you heard anything—anything interesting?

MRS. LAWTY. Nothing directly. But I understand Betty is very popular with the young gentlemen of London and——

MRS. ROMNEY. Indeed!

MRS. LAWTY. And I understand the gentlemen of London are er—er, well, very different from the young gentlemen of Northampton.

MRS. ROMNEY. (*A little bitterly*) Oh, you know it is so easy to be a saint—a Northampton saint—I

really think it takes a rather clever person to be devilish!

MRS. PICKERING. (*Protestingly*) Mrs. Romney!

CLARA. (*Entering from the door at the L.*) Here ma'am, is your shawl.

MRS. WARREN. (*Awakening*) Eh? What? Oh, yes, my shawl—put it over my shoulders, Clara—it will keep me warm—but not too warm—just so—pardon me, ladies, I just shut my eyes to keep out the light—your conversation was so interesting and so refined. (*The coach horn sounds. CLARA runs to the window and looks out*) Clara, come away from the window!

CLARA. (*Shouting in the trumpet*) It's the coach, ma'am, it's the coach!

MRS. WARREN. Is it really, Clara? Oh, ladies, I am so happy to know that nothing has happened. Clara, will you put a little coal on the fire—just poke it up a bit, you know—that is, not too much, but just so, Clara. Clara, light the candles in the hall—not all of them, Clara—just two.

(CLARA goes out.)

MRS. ROMNEY. I am so anxious to hear the gossip of dear old London.

MRS. LAWTY. How familiar!

MRS. WARREN. (*Rising and going to the window*) Ladies, you really must pardon me—I shall only look once, just a peep—I am so worried, you know, and so anxious—yes, there she is, ladies—ladies, I can hardly contain myself—the dear child—oh, she looks so healthy—just like her father, dear man, so like her father. (*She goes to her chair by the fire and assumes a queenly air of expectancy. There is a loud, clear laugh from the hall and,*

BETTY. Dear, dear Clara—a lot of ladies, where? Oh, but you mustn't say that, Clara—a glorious

time, yes, it was ripping. Is mother in here, Clara? Yes yes, yes.

(The ladies look at each other dumbfounded.)

MRS. LAWTY. I am afraid she has not changed for the better. *(This in a whisper. BETTY stands framed in the doorway. She is dressed in an enormous hoop skirt, lace mitts and a high poke hat. She is followed by CLARA who carries band boxes and portmanteaux)*

BETTY. Mother! Ladies! *(She runs to her mother)* Dear, dear, dear old mumsey darling.

MRS. WARREN. Betty dear, you are home again—can it really be you, dear, dear child—you look so fresh and happy—and healthy.

MRS. LAWTY. Overly healthy!

MRS. WARREN. So fresh and healthy—but Betty, dear, what have you on your face?

BETTY. Nothing, mother dear—does it show?

MRS. PICKERING. Powder!

MRS. WARREN. Betty dear, you see the ladies of Northampton are here to see you.

MRS. LAWTY. Rather to see you, Mrs. Warren.

MRS. WARREN. Mrs. Pickering, my daughter Betty—Mrs. Pickering.

MRS. PICKERING. How do you do, Miss Betty.

BETTY. *(Courtesying)* Mrs. Pickering—Mrs. Romney, Mrs. Lawty——

MRS. ROMNEY. Betty dear, what is the news of London?

BETTY. Oh, there is so much to tell of London, you know.

MRS. ROMNEY. Yes, yes of course, London is much larger than Northampton. *(With a withering look at MRS. LAWTY)* Though some people don't realize it.

BETTY. And so many lovely people.

MRS. ROMNEY. (*With a withering look at Mrs. PICKERING who squirms*) So many interesting people.

MRS. LAWTY. (*Coldly*) But so few—er—wholly refined people.

MRS. ROMNEY. Indeed!

MRS. LAWTY. Betty dear, we have heard so many tales of you and——

BETTY. (*With a little catch of her breath*) And whom?

MRS. LAWTY. And London.

BETTY. (*Glancing at her mother*) Oh!

MRS. ROMNEY. Did you see the queen?

BETTY. Indeed, Mrs. Romney, many times—she is a beautiful young girl.

MRS. LAWTY. How slightlying you talk of royalty!

MRS. PICKERING. London is becoming so dreadfully democratic.

MRS. WARREN. Betty dear, I am so glad to have you home again—so happy—I have been so worried—I hope you will like Northampton better now.

BETTY. (*Looking at the women and then going close to her mother*) No, mumsey, I am sure I never shall.

MRS. WARREN. You must be tired, dear.

BETTY. No, dear, not very. You see I took the steam rail as far as Bedford—Oh, mumsey, it was ripping! You surely must go to London soon. We went all of fifteen miles in an hour sometimes!

MRS. WARREN. Betty, how could you?

BETTY. But, mumsey, it was glorious—just like flying—and mumsey, we ate on the train. Oh, it was such fun!

MRS. LAWTY. Fancy one having one's dinner pulled on ahead of one, like a dog chasing his tail!

MRS. ROMNEY. Next we will be having beds on these trains.

MRS. PICKERING. Never!

MRS. LAWTY. Can you imagine one undoing one's bodice in such a public place?

MRS. PICKERING. For shame—how can you think of such terrible things and speak of them aloud before this young lady—and before all of us?

MRS. ROMNEY. But my dear Mrs. Pickering, can't you see that we are in a new era and that the past is irrevocable?

MRS. LAWTY. Not in Northampton—thank heaven, here there are a few sane people.

MRS. WARREN. Betty, did you have Clara take your portmanteau to your room?

BETTY. Yes, mumsey dear, three of them.

MRS. WARREN. Betty! Whatever possessed you—what can you ever do with three of them?

BETTY. They are full of clothes, mumsey, dresses and bonnettes—beautiful ones—pink and blue and lavender.

MRS. PICKERING. Dress is a tool of the devil—now in the South Sea Islands they——

MRS. WARREN. But what can you ever do with them all—wherever can you wear so many dresses? Indeed I do not know how it is in London but in Northampton Sunday still comes but once a week—now when I was your age I had a nice, a very nice one for Sundays, a white one for christenings and a black one for Northampton funerals. But I suppose when one is about to be——

BETTY. (*Covering her mother's mouth with her hand—lovingly shaking her finger at MRS. WARREN*) Sh—sh—Mumsey dear, we must have more color. It will not be so dark and dreary in Northampton soon. Lord Bloshire has seen to it that we have street lights, just like they have in London. Oh, he is going to bring so many improvements to Northampton, perhaps next year the steam rail will be extended from Bedford.

MRS. LAWTY. You don't mean, child, that we may

have one of those horrid noisy things coming into Northampton?

BETTY. Lord Bloshire is going to do everything to make Northampton a modern town.

MRS. PICKERING. Modern indeed!

MRS. LAWTY. (*Sweetly*) But perhaps his Lordship knows best.

MRS. ROMNEY. Yes, he probably knows what we need more than we do ourselves. He has spent so much of his life in London.

MRS. LAWTY. But think of the people of questionable character such a public affair might bring to Northampton. One will not be able to venture beyond one's own garden.

BETTY. But really, ladies, such things are for the best. Don't you really want to see Northampton a modern town?

MRS. PICKERING. Modern, my dear, but not too modern. Now in the South Sea Islands, you know, the cannibals——

MRS. ROMNEY. Well, I sincerely hope *something* happens to make Northampton modern—and interesting.

MRS. LAWTY. Mrs. Romney, it is interesting. Besides being a beautiful town it is the site of the Bloshires—one of England's oldest families. A most important asset I should say. (*With sarcasm*) But then, of course, when one has been raised in London——

MRS. ROMNEY. Betty dear, you seem to be very familiar with the affairs of his Lordship—is it possible that you could have seen him in London?

BETTY. Yes, Mrs. Romney.

MRS. ROMNEY. But surely you had no occasion to talk to him, Betty?

BETTY. Yes, Mrs. Romney.

MRS. LAWTY. Girls are becoming so bold nowadays. Now when I was a girl I never——

MRS. ROMNEY. How interesting, and what did he say, Miss Betty—the time you talked to him?

BETTY. I just don't remember all he said, Mrs. Romney, but of course, he was very anxious to hear about Northampton again—his father and mine were great friends, you know.

MRS. LAWTY. I suppose even a Lord must condescend to speak to the people from his home place—I think it is rather impertinent that——

MRS. ROMNEY. And did he speak of the people, the best people, of course, of Northampton, Betty?

BETTY. I remember very distinctly that he asked——

LADIES. (*On the very edges of their chairs*)
Yes, yes, yes——

BETTY. He asked me if all the fogies of Northampton were still alive.

MRS. LAWTY. Fogies—now I wonder what he could have meant by that—I hope it is complimentary.

MRS. PICKERING. It sounds doubtful.

MRS. ROMNEY. I was at tea with her Ladyship this afternoon—his Lordship is coming down from London soon.

BETTY. Yes, I know.

MRS. ROMNEY. Oh, then you must have seen the Times—they always publish such interesting things about the nobility.

BETTY. I saw his Lordship before I left London.

MRS. ROMNEY. Oh, then perhaps——

MRS. WARREN. Betty dear, I'm sure the ladies will pardon you if you care to go to your room—though I'm sure their conversation is most interesting—you must be very tired. Clara has put a little fire in the grate, dear. (*She calls*) Clara—Clara!

CLARA. (*Entering from the L.*) Yes, ma'am.

MRS. WARREN. Will you please see that Miss

Petty's room is cozy—and, Clara, don't forget the hot water.

CLARA. I wont, ma'am.

MRS. WARREN. Ladies, you will excuse Betty?

(They all nod.)

BETTY. If you please, ladies, I should so like to dress.

MRS. ROMNEY. Yes, indeed, Betty, I am sorry you do not know more of London gossip. I would ask you over to tea but I am really so busy these days.

MRS. PICKERING. I hope I shall see you at church—you must forgive me if I do not call again soon, there is so much to do in our foreign mission work.

MRS. LAWTY. Good day, Miss Betty—I trust you will feel at home in Northampton—I shall no doubt see you again before the summer is over—Northampton is not a large place.

BETTY. You are all so kind. *(She turns at the door and throws her mother a kiss, bows to the ladies)* Au revoir, ladies.

MRS. WARREN. Dear child, so delicate.

MRS. LAWTY. Ugh, the impertinent little creature—putting on her fine airs.

MRS. ROMNEY. Did you hear her talk of his Lordship, just as if she were real well acquainted with him. I suppose she will be telling us next that she had an audience with the queen.

MRS. PICKERING. Of course, I do not know the child very well, but I do believe that it is not best to send girls away from home for their schooling—they become so bold and so vain. Did you hear her telling her mother about her dresses, as if clothes were the only thing in the world.

MRS. LAWTY. I feel so sorry for her mother, so quiet and unassuming. I am afraid Betty will drive her to her grave before her time. Well, I hope she will not try her airs before Lady Bloshire, be-

cause—did Lady Bloshire, by any chance, mention her while you were there this afternoon?

MRS. ROMNEY. Let me see—come to think of it, I believe she did say something, but I am sure it was something trivial.

MRS. LAWTY. Of course.

MRS. ROMNEY. I was so interested to hear about his Lordship that I paid little attention to anything else. It seems he is very much in love—her Ladyship did not mention who with—however, I daresay some very fine London lady.

MRS. WARREN. Do you not think dear Betty is a little lady? Her father, dear man, would have been so proud of her I'm sure.

MRS. PICKERING. (*Shouting*) I hope it is for the best she went away.

MRS. LAWTY. (*Shouting*) Indeed I hope she has learned something from her books.

MRS. ROMNEY. (*Shouting*) She knows so little about London society I trust she has been diligent in her studies. Really I must be going, Mrs. Warren, I suppose you do not go out very often now but if you do happen to be out come in and see me sometime.

MRS. WARREN. Yes, yes, but I get out very little these days—and I will have so much to say to dear Betty—I am sure Betty will be over, however.

MRS. RAMNEY. (*Shouting*) I shall be glad to have *you* come over, Mrs. Warren—I am having a tea for her Ladyship next week so you will pardon me I am sure if I am too busy to receive callers.

MRS. PICKERING. (*Shouting*) I must be going, Mrs. Warren, I really must. I hope Betty will come to church every Sunday.

MRS. LAWTY. (*Shouting*) Good day, Mrs. Warren, good day. This little chat with you this afternoon has been most entertaining. I hope I shall see Betty again sometime but indeed I expect

to be so busy the next few weeks that I shall be ~~un~~able to do any entertaining.

(The knocker is heard—the women look at each other in surprise.)

MRS. WARREN. Yes, yes, ladies, do come in often now that——

CLARA. *(Entering from the back. She looks at the women and then at MRS. WARREN as if she would rather not speak)* It's Lady Bloshire, ma'am—her Ladyship.

MRS. WARREN. Oh, Lady Bloshire—Oh, have her come right in, Clara—Oh, and Clara, please call Betty, I know her Ladyship will be so glad to see the dear child. *(The ladies resume their seats)* And Clara, tell her to dress her hair—not too much—just so—and light *all* the candles in the hall—Clara, you may serve tea—tea in the Chelsea china.

(CLARA holds her head high as she passes the ladies.)

THE LADIES. Oh, her Ladyship. Oh—ah—oh—I shall stay a little longer—yes, really—no—is it possible?—etc.

LADY BLOSHIRE. *(Bowing in doorway)* Mrs. Warren—Ladies of Northampton. *(She talks with an air of superiority yet she is a motherly woman)*

ALL. *(Rising and bowing)* Your Ladyship.

MRS. WARREN. Pray be seated, Lady Bloshire.

LADY BLOSHIRE. Thank you, Mrs. Warren. It is indeed a pleasure to see you so well.

MRS. WARREN. Yes, yes—I am glad to see you well, Lady Bloshire—I am feeling much better—happier now that Betty is home again.

LADY BLOSHIRE. And you should, Mrs. Warren, she is such a little fairy. I shall be glad to see ~~her~~

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